

STEEL PRICE ROW WILL BE PUT UP TO THE PRESIDENT

Hines Formally Refuses to
Accept the Industrial
Board Figures.

SAYS THEY ARE TOO HIGH

Chairman Peek Issues a
Statement Denouncing
R-R. Admin. Attitude.

WASHINGTON, April 11.—Acceptance by the railroad administration of the steel prices agreed upon by the representatives of the industry and the Department of Commerce's Industrial board, was definitely and formally refused by Director General Hines. The refusal was announced after Mr. Hines had conferred with Chairman Geo. N. Peek of the Board.

The director general's decision announced as final, was based on the ground that the prices as agreed upon are too high; that the industrial board is without power to impose them upon the railroad administration and that the return of all prices to normal will be seriously retarded and that the approval by government purchasing agencies of prices of which it seems excessive.

Chairman Peek of the industrial board, let it be known after his conference with Director General Hines, that he would present the question involved in the controversy with the railroad administration to President Wilson and would ask the president to sustain the action of the board.

"After repeated consideration of the steel and iron prices proposed by the industrial board," said a statement by Mr. Hines, "I am still of the opinion that these prices are too high and therefore that the railroad administration cannot approve them as being reasonable prices.

"To the extent that the railroad administration finds it necessary to make purchases it will continue to make them on the best terms obtainable by fair and just methods, with full recognition of the principle that a government agency with large purchasing power must be particularly careful not even to attempt action which could be regarded as oppressive.

"The object of the railroad administration throughout has been to obtain a fair and reasonable price level. It has never contemplated that it should get a lower price level than the general public.

"If the industrial board can assist in bringing about levels of prices at which the railroad administration will feel justified in buying its cooperation will be welcomed.

"In the newspaper discussions of the matter suggestion has at times occurred that the principal thing is to est-

ablish some price which the government will endorse to the end that the public will begin buying at that price and that were establishment of a price for this purpose is more important than the intrinsic reasonableness of the price itself. I cannot agree with this principle. I am keenly alive to the great desirability of stimulating business in every reasonable way, but I believe in the long run that the endorsement by a government purchasing agency of an excessive price level would be harmful to the public interest and would not bring about confidence and that the end sought to be obtained will come only by reaching a price level which the public itself shall consider to be reasonable.

"I believe one of the greatest problems that confronts this country is that of getting prices back to a reasonable level and I believe progress in the direction will be seriously retarded by the approval by a government purchasing agency of prices which it deems excessive.

Explaining that the railroad administration had never sought to give the impression that it approved the steel prices, Mr. Hines said:

"It has been perfectly clear to me throughout the discussion of this matter and I think it is now generally understood that no power was conferred on the industrial board to impose any prices upon the railroad administration but that it retained the power and also under a duty to exercise its own judgment in respect to this important matter. Throughout the discussion in the industrial board itself, Mr. T. C. Powell, the representative of the railroad administration, indicated that the final approval of any prices so far as the railroad administration was concerned rested with the director general himself. Mr. Powell during the discussion objected that not only the prices on steel rail, but the prices generally were unreasonably high and before the committee announced its action, he positively stated that the railroad administration would not agree to buy at the proposed rates."

Recounting the history of the negotiations, Mr. Hines stated that his counselors, John Skelton Williams, Robert S. Lovett and Henry Walters, members of the railroad administration's advisory committee on purchases Mr. Powell, Henry B. Spencer, director of the railroad administration's division of purchasing and interstate commerce commissioner McChord, had agreed unanimously that the industrial boards steel prices were too high. All of these advisers except Commissioner McChord consulted at one time with Chairman Colver of the Federal Trade Commission and subsequently expressed the opinion that the prices were too high. The attitude of Mr. Colver was not discussed. The advisers opinion was again reiterated after conferences yesterday in New York with representatives of the steel industry, Mr. Hines said.

President Wilson will be appealed to immediately by cable to take a hand in the controversy between the railroad administration and the Department of Commerce Industrial board, which brought to a head by the new steel price schedule approved by the board after conferences with the steel industry.

This announcement was made in a statement issued for the industrial board by its chairman, George N. Peek, after the director general had made public his final decision. The open break between the two government agencies came after Mr. Hines and Chairman Peek had conferred for about an hour.

In a statement denouncing the attitude of the railroad administration by which it was asserted "the government is exhibited as setting up an industrial

policy with one hand and destroying it with another," Chairman Peek warned against the railroad administration exercise of its power of "monopolistic buying" of rails and declares that the "director general must assume full responsibility for all the results of the course he has chosen."

CASUALTY LIST

The following casualties are reported by the commanding general of the American Expeditionary Forces:

Killed in action, 4; died from accident and other causes, 4; died of disease, 6; wounded severely, 10; wounded (degree undetermined), 18; wounded slightly, 147; missing in action, 1 Total, 199.

Killed In Action.

*Privates—
Calagero, Pasquale, New York, N. Y.
Hall, Arnold D., Dalton, Pa.
Moore, Day Dalton, Wakeeney, Kans.
Olson, Victor, Falconer, N. Y.

Wounded Slightly.

Corporal—
Thompson, Hugh L., Lochgelly, W. Va.
Private—
Keegan, Edward E., Elkins, W. Va.



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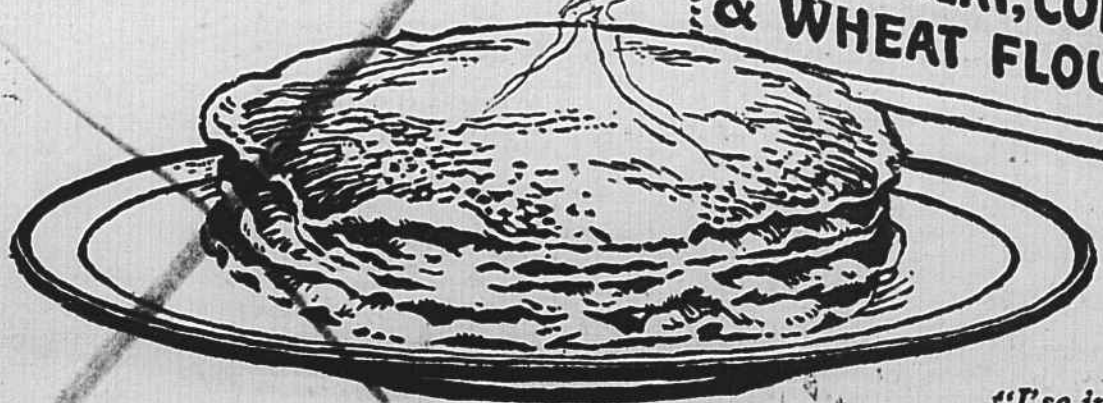
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